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To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern,

As an Information Technology professional, a US Navy veteran and a citizen of the United States, I feel the proposed settlement of the Microsoft Antitrust case to be a great disservice to the American consumer. The proposed remedies are little more than a 'slap on the wrist'. To truly promote fair competition in the Operating Systems/software market, much stricter constraints must be placed upon Microsoft. My recommended remedies are as follows:

1. Open & standardize the Windows API and file formats:

The Windows API (or "Applications Programming Interface") is the set of instructions that Windows applications/programs use to "talk to" the operating system. Microsoft provides these APIs to 3rd party software vendors in order for them to develop applications for Windows. However, it's widely known that Microsoft often 'fiddles' with the API, changing things that break competitors' products. For instance; if a competitor developed a multimedia application, which competes with Microsoft's own Windows Media Player (such as RealPlayer or QuickTime), Microsoft can easily alter the Windows API to allow these competing products to no longer work properly. It's also known that Microsoft's own programmers take advantage of so-called 'hidden APIs' that non-Microsoft developers can't use.

Microsoft's file formats also need to be opened. That is, file formats for its MS Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access), Windows Media format, along with any other proprietary formats, need to be standardized and publicized. This would allow competitors to build Windows software applications, and operating systems, that compete with Microsoft on a level field.

2. Compliance & adherence with open standards:

The Windows operating system uses many, 'Microsoft only', proprietary formats and technologies, that make it incompatible with competing products. For instance, Microsoft uses an API called "Direct 3D", for all its 3D development/rendering. Direct 3D is only usable on a Windows operating system. If an application were written using Direct 3D, all other operating systems would be unable to take advantage of it. An alternative product such as "OpenGL", would be a much better solution, as it is vendor-neutral and governed by a standards committee. In fact, Apple Computer made OpenGL the basis of its 3D API in their new operating system, "Mac OS X". Indeed, there are many open source/vendor-neutral APIs that could be used in place of Microsoft's proprietary ones.

With Microsoft's APIs and file formats fully standardized, documented and published, and having Microsoft adhere to open, industry standards, other software vendors could compete fairly.

Regards,
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